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SPEAKER BAACK: One minute.

SENATOR HALL: ...for the proposal that I think is before us in the tuition tax deduction. But we need to recognize the role that private education plays in the overall system. We need to recognize there are 35,000 students in the state that currently are educated in these types of facilities, that's 35,000 students that don't have to be educated by the state. And that, clearly, is a cost savings that this proposal, LB 332 as an amendment to 773, does recognize. It recognizes that at a very minor expense to the overall state, and it could be enough to just keep some of those operations alive and well. It's not going to save some of them. They are going by the wayside, many of these schools, because of lack of numbers are going to close. But the issue here is one of recognition of what they currently do provide to the state and the savings to the overall taxpaying public. I would urge adoption of the amendment to the bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Hall. Discussion on the Hall amendment. Senator Withem.

SENATOR WITHEM: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, there's very little I can add to what Senator Hall has already said about the importance and significance of this amendment. I just wanted to arise and add my voice to those that are in support. One of the things I think we've tried to do in the last few years, in the area of education, is try to quit looking at education in terms of the different boxes things fit within, and try to move toward an outcome-based approach towards education. If the system works, kids are getting educated, it's fine; if it doesn't work in terms of kids getting educated, then let's change it. But let's not get into concerning ourselves too much with what a particular thing is called, the size of it, those other sorts of things. And we've been applying those standards to public education, more and more. I think they also ought to apply in the area of private education. As Senator Hall indicated, we have in Nebraska a very excellent private school system that takes a tremendous burden off of the elementary...public elementary, secondary schools of our state. If we think we have a property tax problem in Nebraska now, close all of the private schools, particularly up in the Omaha metropolitan area, have all of those students dumped into the public school system, and